



Oregon School Employees Association

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House Rules Committee
Rep. Julie Fahey, Chair

Chair Fahey and members of the committee:

As you know, the Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) represents more than 24,000 workers who support all levels of public education in Oregon's 36 counties, including Head Start programs, K-12 school districts, education service districts (ESD), parks and community colleges. Classified employees are a key group of frontline professional educators who support Oregon's students every day, including some of the most economically and medically fragile. They are highly practical and want to move from problem to solution.

That attitude is why OSEA recommends support of House Bill (HB) 4024 with the dash-three amendments. The bill strikes a needed balance between the many competing perspectives on the complicated issue of campaign finance reform. We know that fine tuning in the future will be necessary, but this bill makes significant, long-awaited improvements – and Oregonians have been waiting for a solution for long enough.

We are pleased to see that the dash-three amendments would ensure opportunities for organized citizens, through small donor PACs and membership organizations, to counterbalance the power of the wealthy few. To be clear, we would strongly prefer to curtail the power that wealth has in our political system. Unfortunately, under *Citizens United*, a more equitable balance is not realistic. We must balance competing interests and then trust in Oregonians, equipped with the additional information and clarity that HB 4024 will provide, to make the best decisions.

Our members, like most Oregonians, want to hear directly from candidates about their campaign priorities, not independent expenditure groups who they can't hold accountable. Our members, and other Oregonians, want to see reasonable limits that center candidates in elections, rather than our current system, focused on the biggest-spending contributors.

HB 4024 is not a perfect solution to the complex challenges we face as a state in running free and fair elections. However, we see it as a path forward to prevent serious voter confusion between competing ballot measures. It addresses the most pressing elections issues that Oregon faces: limiting contributions and ensuring transparency. Oregonians have waited patiently for campaign finance reform that doesn't let pursuit of perfection delay needed and impactful change. OSEA agrees with the legislative intent because the core policy elements of the bill will improve our elections as we collaborate on additional improvements.

OSEA recommends your support for HB 4024 with the dash three amendments.

Sincerely,
Bob Estabrook
OSEA Government Relations Specialist

*The Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) is an affiliate of
the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the AFL-CIO.*

